How Jog The Numbed Conscience of the American Press? Page 2

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Guilty — Of Being A Bully and A Boor

The unanimous report of the Watkins committee represents one of the rare occasions in recent years when the conservative forces in American society have fulfilled their moral and political obligations. One of the main objectives of any Fascist movement must be to break down the interwoven fabric of tradition, dignity and respect which makes orderly government possible. The safeguarding of these inherited values and attitudes should be of special concern to the true conservative. In this respect the six members of the Watkins committee lived up to their responsibility.

The Senate will follow them in censuring McCarthy. There will be a bitter fight, but that fight will serve only to separate conservatives from reactionaries and Fascists, and to show how few Senators are in the latter categories. When a Senator George approves and a Senator Jenner denounces, the line of battle is clear. It is not one on which McCarthy can win more than a handful of votes, and the death of Senator McCarran has deprived him of the only supporter who had any considerable sphere of influence in the Senate.

Basically it may be said that McCarthy is being censured only for being a bully and a boor. But the Watkins committee acted wisely in so limiting itself. The life of the Senate depends on free debate, and there can be no free debate without a latitude in which abuses may occur. The Senate has no right to sit in judgment on the ideas of a Senator, but it has a right to censure him for conduct which infringes on its honor and dignity. This is the distinction the Watkins committee drew, and the Senate will accept.

When *Is* McCarthy Going To Answer Those Questions?

The country is indebted to Senators Flanders, Fulbright and Morse for their part in bringing charges, to former Senator Benton who initiated the original investigation into McCarthy's finances, and to Senators Hayden, Hennings and Hendrickson who went through with the original investigation when other Senators got cold feet. The questions put by Senator Hennings to McCarthy in November, 1952, are still unanswered by our Fifth Amendment Senator, and we hope they will be pressed in the censure debate and after.

Did McCarthy divert to his personal advantage funds contributed to him for his campaign against Communism? Did he use friends and associates "to secrete receipts, income, commodity and stock speculation . . .?" The most important question of all was "Whether your activities on behalf of certain special interest groups, such as housing, sugar and China, were motivated by self-interest." The answer to this would begin to unravel the real conspiracy in this country—the conspiracy by the Kuomintang and its agents to destroy freedom in America and draw us into war on behalf of Chiang.

McCarthy's function has been to terrorize into silence all those in government and out who were critical of Chiang Kai-shek. In this task, he and McCarran were comrades in arms. The McCarran-Jenner committee investigation of the Institute of Pacific Relations, the McCarthy attack on the State Department were the twin instruments of the China Lobby and of those pro-Fascist forces which wished to reverse American war-time policy, to defame the past, to make Franco Spain and a new reactionary Germany our main allies. McCarran and McCarthy and their clerical allies sought and still seek World War III. And though McCarran is dead and McCarthy may be on the skids, the forces which they served are far from defeated . The paranoiac atmosphere they helped create is far from being dissipated.

The McCarthy censure is in a way the fruit of the Republican victory at the last election. Had the Democrats won, the Republicans would have been happy to exploit and follow him in opposition. But once his own party came into power, McCarthy's arragonce, conceit and ambition would not allow him to play a secondary role. He dreamed of being a dictator, and would not suffer patiently the role of a conventional politician. His German-schooled advisers urged the dynamic course congenial to his temperament and so he was forced to gamble on a clash with his own party, with the President he helped elect, with the army and with the conservative forces of American society. The gamble is being lost. The Republicans, having turned on him, must smash him now. Unfortunately they believe that to do they must prove that they are in no way "soft on communism." The result is Brownellism, and the kind of competition in anti-Communism between Democrat and Republican which disgraced the last few weeks of Congress. The next few weeks will see a step-up in the witch hunt.

Is The Country Growing Bored With Hobgoblins?

Yet in the context of the political fight which this report will precipitate, must not the witch hunt lose a good deal of its steam? Can McCarthy be bumped off without at the same time making McCarthyism a political liability? Doesn't the observed lack of interest in McCarthy, the sheer boredom which is beginning to envelop him in the public mind, a boredom which also extends to the witch hunt? Isn't it degenerating into the private passion of a frenetic few? These are the questions which give one hope, though the Belfrage deportation case on the next page shows we still have far to go.

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The Government Moves to Deport a Radical Editor at McCarthy's Bidding

How Jog The Numbed Conscience of the American Press?

New York—When Cedric Belfrage's biography of the Rev. Claude Williams, "South of God," (published in England as "Let My People Go") appeared in 1940, it got an almost uniformly enthusiastic press. The *New York Times* said "Claude Williams strives to make Christianity mean what he believes its Founder intended it to mean, and fights to save Christian democracy from its American enemies." The New York *Herald-Tribune* called the Southern preacher "one of the spiritual heroes of America today" and the *Chicago Tribune* thought the book "Stirring, invigorating, thought-provoking." The lone dissenter was Gerald L. K. Smith, who assailed the book as communistic.

The old reviews are a measure of how much the American climate has changed in less than a decade and a half. Last Monday, in the huge grimy headquarters of the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service at 63rd and Columbus Avenues, the Rev. Williams appeared as the first witness for the defense of his biographer. The preacher himself is appealing his conviction for heresy by the Presbyterian Church in Michigan. Belfrage, English-born editor of the *National Guardian*, is up for deportation. 1940's heroes have become 1950's pariahs.

Cheerful Note

"Sen. McCarthy, as friends picture him: The Red hunter is in the dumps. He's tired, physically, from the two inventigations. And he's whipped down, too, mentally. The friends he thought he had in the Senate aren't so many. Few requests are being made for his political assistance. He sees no end to the inquiries aimed at his conduct—even if the GOP wins in November. If the Democrats take over, he will lose his chairmanship and face still more investigations of his conduct."

—*Washington Outlook, Business Week, Sept. 25*

Belfrage's deportation is sought on the charge that he was in 1937-38 a member of the Communist party. But the spectacle of the government trying to deport an editor for political views occasions little flurry. The hearing opened in a low-ceilinged square room, with five reporters and two elderly ladies present. One of the reporters was from the *Guardian*, a second was a girl from *Reuter's*, a third was IFS and the other two were from the UP and AP.

The Rev. Williams, a tall, thin, elderly man with graying hair worn *en brosse*, testified in a soft, cultivated voice. His testimony contradicted that of the government's key witness, Martin Berkeley, as to the time, place and circumstances of a meeting at which Williams spoke in Belfrage's home in Hollywood.

Berkeley, an ex-Communist who turned informer after having himself been identified before the House Un-American Activities Committee, had said that in late 1937 or early 1938 he heard Williams speak at a closed Communist meeting of about 12 persons at Belfrage's home on Ogden or Oakden Avenue in Hollywood.

Williams testified that this meeting at which he spoke was public, that some 65 or 70 persons attended, that it was not arranged by or through the Communist party, that it was held in May or June of 1938 and that it was at 7777 Fierenzi drive. The purpose was to collect money for Commonwealth College in Arkansas, of which Williams was then director.

Identified With "George Oakden"

A second defense witness, a well-known handwriting expert, Miss Elizabeth McCarthy testified that there was "very real doubt" that the signature, "George Oakden" on two Communist party membership books for 1937 and 1938 was the signature of Cedric Belfrage. The books had been obtained by a Los Angeles police spy working as an agent inside the Communist party. Berkeley had testified that Belfrage used the name "Oakden" in the party and in writing for the *New Masses*.

Berkeley testified earlier that he himself used the name Martin Porter but when shown an article in the *New Masses* signed "by Martin Porter and George Oakden" could not recall that he had ever collaborated with Belfrage. The defense submitted evidence that Belfrage had written for the *New Masses* at the time under his own name—and showed that the magazine then carried many articles by non-Communists, including Ralph Bunche, Robert Benchley and Sir Stafford Cripps.

A Cohn-Schine Tableau

All this dreary and dubious business was dredged up as a result of a summons from McCarthy. Belfrage appeared before the McCarthy committee in May, 1953, in a Cohn-Schine tableau designed to make it appear that postwar occupation effort to democratize the German press had been a Communist plot. Belfrage was Press Control Officer for SHAEF in Germany in 1945.

Roy Cohn announced during the McCarthy hearing that at the Senator's request there was an immigration official present "to do something about this immediately." Deportation proceedings followed, first against Belfrage and then against his ex-wife, who has since been allowed to leave voluntarily for her native England after stating that she had no desire to continue living in the United States. Mrs. Belfrage said she had been anti-Communist for ten years.

Only a press with a badly numbed conscience could let such an affair pass without protest. If an alien editor can be deported for past membership—real or framed—in the Communist party, a naturalized editor can be denaturalized and deported on the same grounds. A native born editor (under the new citizenship law) may be deprived of his nationality in much the same way. The precedent is a sinister one, but no one seems to care. The same press which hails the recommended censure of McCarthy hasn't a word to say in defense of an editor who is his victim.

What the Germans Didn't Tell Dulles

"Though official circles in Bonn had persistently lulled the people and their representatives into the belief that somehow EDC would yet be a success—in reality hope had been given up about a year ago. General Adolf Heusinger was already complaining last year that the Amt Blank (Rearmament Bureau) knew that it worked on EDC plans in vain, and that these in their elaborated form would never come to fruition. They continued working only on account of the Americans, so that they should not get the impression that the German government had lost interest in EDC."

—*Der Spiegel* (W. Germany's leading news weekly), September 8.

Propaganda Antidote

"Visiting the camps one gets a somewhat different impression of the facts from those commonly publicized. Why had they wished to come south, your Correspondent asked a group of refugees [from North Vietnam]. We did not ask to come south, but the Government told us to come and so we had to come, was the reply from one man, with much nodding of heads in the circle. The observation that they were supposed to be in flight from Communism produced puzzled looks of incomprehension.

—*Report from Saigon, The Times (London), Sept. 23*

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State Department's New Passport Hearing Procedure Called Sham

Star Chamber Methods of Loyalty Probe Applied to Travel Applicants

Washington—Dr. Otto Nathan is an internationally known economist, now a professor at New York University. In Germany, under the Weimar Republic, he served for 12 years as an economic adviser to the Federal government. In this country he was an adviser to President Hoover's Emergency Committee on Employment in 1931, and held several posts later under the New Deal. He became a naturalized citizen in 1939. He travelled abroad on an American passport in 1939, and again every year from 1945 to 1949.

On December 24, 1952, twenty months ago, Dr. Nathan applied for a new passport. The application stated that he was going abroad for a relatively short time to obtain material for a work on which he was engaged and in the hope of making arrangements in Western Europe for remunerative writing on economic subjects.

Three months after making his application, Dr. Nathan received a letter from Mrs. Ruth B. Shipley, the director of the passport office, asking for a statement under oath as to whether he was or ever had been a Communist. Dr. Nathan replied that he objected as a matter of principle but nevertheless enclosed an affidavit saying, "I am not now and never have been . . ."

Proceedings A La Kafka

This affidavit, instead of settling the matter, only led into an interminable Kafka-ish labryrinth of correspondence and "hearings" in which Dr. Nathan was asked such questions as whether he had ever signed a petition supporting a victim of a Congressional committee and whether he had ever corresponded with Oscar Lange, a Chicago University professor of economics who became Polish Ambassador to the U. S.

The complaint he filed in Federal District Court here against the State Department relates that on one occasion Mrs. Shipley's assistant, Ashley Nicholas, said to Dr. Nathan that he was "too good to be turned down and too bad to be given a passport." Just what was "bad" was not specified. Mr. Nicholas is also alleged to have commented at one point, "You have made many good friends among many fine people in this country, but you also have many friends on the left."

The suit Dr. Nathan brought after a year and a half of exasperating delays is the first legal challenge to the new passport rules and procedure belatedly adopted by the Department after the *Bauer* case.

The Department had for a long time been denying passports on the vague grounds of "the best interests of the United States" when in *Bauer vs. Acheson*, 106 F. Supp. 445, a 3-man court decided that no such absolute discretion existed. As a result, in September, 1952, the Department issued new rules, setting up standards for denial of passports and a Board of Passport Appeals.

Even The Hoover Commission Critical

"The autonomous manner in which the [State] Department's Passport Division functions have been conducted, however, has been subject to criticism from time to time. That the Division acts rather as a law unto itself is generally the reason for the criticism, and as a practical matter there is some justification in this censure."—Hoover Commission Report.

But this turned out to be a mere gesture. No Board was appointed. It was not until December 23, 1953, fifteen months later (as this *Weekly* reported exclusively at the time, see Vol. I, No. 49) that the threat of a suit by the physicist Martin Kamen forced the Department to appoint the Board. Even then the names of the Board members were never made public, and (as inquiry last week disclosed) the names of the members, the number of cases processed and everything else about its activities are still withheld by the Department from the press as "confidential."

Foggy Rules in Foggy Bottom

The rules set up by the Department in passport cases are as foggy as the mists which give their name to the Foggy Bottom in which the State Department building stands in Washington. Dr. Nathan found himself confronted by the same kind of vague standards and star chamber hearings on undisclosed evidence as have grown customary in employe loyalty cases.

Indeed in their reply to Dr. Nathan's lawyer, Leonard Boudin, government counsel drew an analogy with loyalty proceedings, and made the sweeping claim, "The Secretary of State has wide discretion . . . Once that discretion has been exercised, it is submitted, the Court should not review the evidence on which the discretion was exercised." In effect, this would make Mrs. Shipley's *ipsa dixit* the law in passport cases.

In the William Clark case we discussed last week, Mrs. Shipley denied him a passport because (as in Paul Robeson's) she disapproved of what he was likely to say abroad. In the Nathan case, she denied a passport because she did not like some of the applicant's associations and statements at home. The issue before the Federal court is whether freedom of speech must be relinquished to obtain a passport.

The Charges Made Against the State Dept. In the Nathan Passport Case

"When the judicial recognition of the arbitrary character of these [passport] policies occurred in the Bauer case, the State Department had two possible alternatives: It could reform, or it could pretend to do so. It chose the latter course. The result was an extraordinary concoction of regulations which were: (a) couched in vague, subjective and polemical terms, rather than legal ones; (b) in violation of basic First Amendment rights for the purpose of ensuring the containment of any person with a vestige or even past history of liberal activity in the New Deal or otherwise; and (c) even in conflict with the will of Congress as expressed in the Internal Security Act of 1950.

"Never during the period 1789 to 1950 did Congress ever establish a political screen for citizens desiring to travel abroad. In 1950 it passed the Internal Security Act of 1950. Section 6 (a) of that law denies passports to a single category: members of organizations registered or required by a final order to register under the Act. To date, no organization is the subject of a final order as defined in the Act, although proceedings seeking a final order against the Communist Party of the United States are now pending in the Court of Appeals of this Circuit. In that connection it will be noted that (a) the statute refers to present, not past, membership, and (b) plaintiff [Dr. Otto Nathan] executed an affidavit denying both past and present membership.

"The defendant's [State Department's] standards are manifestly different from those imposed by Congress. Where the Congress banned current members in organizations found after hearing to be illicit, the defendant bans past members in an unlimited number of organizations which were never required to register. In addition defendant proposes to assess a complex of activities in one's life, to determine whether his presence at public meetings, his trade union membership, his friends and associations put him beyond the pale."

—Otto Nathan v. John Foster Dulles, U.S. District Court (D. of C.), Civil Action No. 3479-54

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The Misadventures of America's Own "Poet Laureate"

Oh, Sweet Security and Political Purity, Of Thee We Sing

The *Times* of London publishes what is by far the world's best literary weekly supplement. Its latest of Sept. 17, just arrived here, is an elephantine special number, containing a 100-page study of American writing today, an extraordinarily able, just and friendly survey. One of its revelations is that American "poets laureate" must now be cleared by the FBI.

The American equivalent of a poet laureate is the Poet in Residence annually chosen for the Library of Congress. The post figures in an article, "Prophets Without Honour? The Public Status of American Writers" in which the *Times* dealt with the impact of the witch hunt on literature. The article disclosed that the chair of poetry at the Library of Congress has been vacant for two years "because the last poet nominated for the position failed to receive a security clearance."

In its swift and majestic way, the *Times* did not pause for so mundane a detail as the poet's name. But the tantalizing brief reference was noted by a sharp-eyed *Washington Star* reporter, Mary McGrory. What she discovered made page one of her paper Sept. 26, but does not seem to have been picked up by other papers and the wire services, though surely it is news that poetry, too, must now be politically pasteurized in the U.S.A.

The Muse Is Counter-Attacked

The poet turned out to be the estemed William Carlos Williams. He was picked for the Library post in 1952 by a group which included T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Archibald MacLeish and Thornton Wilder. Dr. Williams (he is a physician in Rutherford, N. J.) was delighted, wound up his personal affairs and rented a house in Washington. Dr. Luther H. Evans, then Librarian of Congress, now director of UNESCO, signified his approval.

But Dr. Evans took fright when Dr. Williams was attacked in rightist circles on political grounds. *Counter-Attack* published a list of allegedly subversive causes to which Dr. Williams had lent his name.

Dr. Williams was supposed to have taken his post in the Fall of 1952. In December a letter informed him that a preliminary FBI report had occasioned the Library to ask for a full investigation. In January of 1953 Dr. Evans revoked the appointment.

Warning To Do-Gooders

Science Service's News Letter **reported recently that at least 50 eminent scietists had been refused visas into the U.S. during the past two years. Last week the State Department announced via difficulties had been cleared up in two cases: those of the famous Cambridge physicist, Dirac, and the Australian physicist, Oliphant. Typical of the Department is that both visas were granted long after both scientists gave up and changed heir plans—Dirac to attend the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, Oliphant for a transit permit to to enable him to touch at Honolulu en route to Canada. Oliphant was supposed to have passed through Hawaii on September 3. The *Washington Post* reported Sept. 24 that an unnamed State Department official said of Oliphant: "He still is inadmissible . . . (he is) a do-gooder, one of the boys who monkey around with pinkos . . . Oppenheimer case . . . that sort of thing."**

This led to protest from Dr. Williams and his friends. The former, through counsel, insisted that the FBI investigate him "relentlessly." The FBI, "astonished," said it could not do so because Dr. Williams was no longer on the civil service rolls. In April of 1953 Dr. Evans again appointed Dr. Williams to the post as of May 15 "or as soon thereafter as loyalty and security procedures are successfully completed." That was 18 months ago and Dr. Williams is still waiting.

The saddest aspect of this affair is the reaction of Dr. Williams. Circumstances which would have evoked a noble thunder from a Milton, Shelley or Whitman * bring from our present-day poet only a self-defensive bleat. He denied that he was ever a Communist or a Communist sympathizer but admitted he signed various appeals for various causes. "I don't think much," he told the *Star*, pathetically, "of the way the Communist party takes advantage of an unguarded citizenry."

Next time our poet feels a generous humanitarian inspiration, he will no doubt check first with the nearest FBI office. We can hear the lovely melody now of that Ode to a Skylark (With Q Clearance).

* Footnote for Investigators: John Milton, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Walt Whitman, all notorious radicals, but none believed likely to apply in the near future for government employment.

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